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The Selection of Kitchen Utensils

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THE woman who has been keeping house for years does not have the same equipment problems as the new homemaker. She owns a varied collection and not always an efficient one. A study of it will be a revelation to her. She will be interested to summarize in her own mind or on paper the kitchen jobs and the equipment she uses for each. She will probably find that she uses more utensils than are actually needed. She could get along with less and thereby save time. The extra equipment has been stacked with the other. It is handled each day when it should be stored out of the way. Some of the utensils she uses are not in good condition. They should be disposed of or repaired. Perhaps the good equipment will be sufficient if it is conveniently arranged at the place of use where it will give the greatest service with the least effort. She may decide that she can do better work if she were to purchase a few pieces of carefully selected equipment.

Before buying new equipment, even the small pieces, the up-to-date homemaker will make a careful investigation. She may be able to form snap decisions but the chances are that she will be better satisfied in the end if she takes time to investigate. Her experience has given her a very good foundation, but she should be open-minded in using it.

There are a number of magazines in the country that maintain bureaus of investigation of household equipment. For a small fee they will furnish a list of equipment that they have tested, the names of the manufacturer and the address. It might be well to start the investigation with such a list. A postal addressed to them will bring a wealth of material setting forth the best points of their products. A comparison will soon show the piece of equipment having the most desirable features. Leading magazines also publish excellent articles on equipment. If a homemaker reads these she will be better able to decide what she wants.

Reliable local firms handle a good line of equipment. It is generally incomplete because of the small demand and limited space for storage. The merchant will often put in one of a special line if a homemaker is interested or the store will notify her when the salesman will make his rounds since he generally carries a more complete line. Stores often give demonstrations on the use of equipment either at a home or at the store. The housewife who is thinking of purchasing equipment will find it to her advantage to make use of these demonstrations. It may be possible to get from the stores the names of women who have purchased a piece of equipment. After a conference with them, perhaps actually seeing the equipment in operation, the housewife will be better able to judge its worth. Sometimes it is possible to have the loan of equipment to try out in one's own home. A testing circle of interested neighbors may be the means of selecting the right equipment.

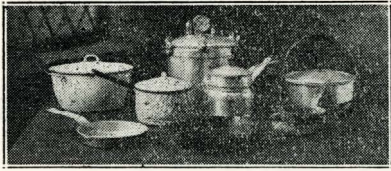


Fig. 1.—Kettles you will use.

keep and renewal. The frequency of use will be a factor considered. A tool that is used every day will give greater service for the initial cost than one that is used only once a week. She will be justified in purchasing the former even at a much greater outlay of money. She will select equipment of a size and shape suited to her use. For a family of eight, she will need pieces of larger equipment than for a family of two. She will not purchase right handed equipment if she is lefthanded. She will select utensils of simple construction because they are easy to clean. A pan moulded in one piece with rounded corners is easier to clean than one with square corners. Loose kettle knobs, protruding pieces of metal as an angel food pan or a rim or barrel of food grinder represent poor construction for ease in cleaning. Cracks, joinings and rims offer places in which dirt will settle. Utensils must set level. Covers must fit. Parts must run smoothly. Straight sided kettles or those with slightly rounded bottom and wire handles fit close together and save stove space. Light weight utensils, wooden knobs on kettle covers, rings for tipping kettles, and no sharp edges mean comfort and ease in handling. After an investigation of this kind, the housewife has formulated her own standard. She will be quite sure that the equipment she purchases is right for the task it is to do.

Wire Goods

There are a few pieces of wire goods that can be very helpful to the housewife. These include the dish drainer, cooling rack, frying basket, toaster, potato masher, whips, flour sieves and strainers.

The frame work should be so strong that it will not bend easily. The cross wires should be securely fastened to the main wires by winding, soldering or both. The mesh must be close so that there is no sagging. Poor wire goods are worthless.

The value of a dish drainer is increased if it has a basket in which to drain the silver. If this basket is hinged or can be removed the drainer is easier to clear. There should be solid wire loops made on a backward slant so that the dishes can be scalded easily.

In all recipes in which flour is used, the flour is sifted once to make the flour light and not to remove dirt. The failure to sift the flour is likely to result in too stiff a dough since one cup of unsifted flour is equal to about one and a fourth cups. For angel food cakes the flour is sifted a number of times.

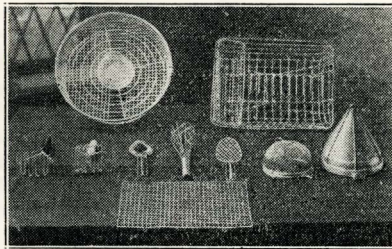


Fig. 2.—Well constructed wire goods.

KITCHEN UTENSILS

The new flour sieves are constructed to save labor. With these flour can be sifted two to four times in one operation. Three styles of sieves are displayed in the illustration. The one at the right is a tin can in which is suspended a series of four sieves. The flour is sifted through, the can inverted and the flour sifted through the sieve a second time making eight times for two operations. The second sieve is also a can which has a removable top and bottom so that it can be used either end up and the flour sifted twice without removing it from the can. The sieve is fastened between two oblong loops to wire which move across the surface of the wire net by the right and left movement of the handle. The third sieve can be held and operated with one hand. The pull on the inside handle moves a wire frame over the netting. This type of flour sieve has either one or two wire screens. The third sieve is more difficult to clean because the machinery to operate it is more complicated. However, it is well constructed and will stand hard wear.

The cooling rack is fine to use for cakes, cookies and bread. It may also be used for draining silver when washing dishes.

The larger sieve at the right of the illustration is used for straining large quantities of soup or white sauce. It is well constructed and will stand hard usage.

Measuring Cups

Every housewife makes certain products by a method of her own. She cannot pass these recipes on to anyone because they are not standardized. Standard recipes require accurate measurements. A good measuring cup is a time and money saver.

Select a measuring cup with straight sides. There should be no groove around the lower edge to collect dirt. The divisions of $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{3}{4}$, $\frac{1}{3}$, and $\frac{2}{3}$ should be plainly marked so that they are visible from both the inside and outside. A cup full should come even with the top, otherwise it is impossible to smooth off a dry ingredient. A top extending above the full cup line either straight or at an angle is a hindrance to rapid accurate measuring of dry ingredients. It may be of value in measuring liquid ingredients. The lip should not extend above the cup but on a straight line with the top. The cup may have a lip at one or both sides in front or no lip. Buy the cup which has the lip on the side most convenient for your use. It is convenient to have two measuring cups, one for dry and the other for liquid ingredients. The aluminum cups have proved the most accurate. The standard measuring cup holds 237 cubic centimeters.

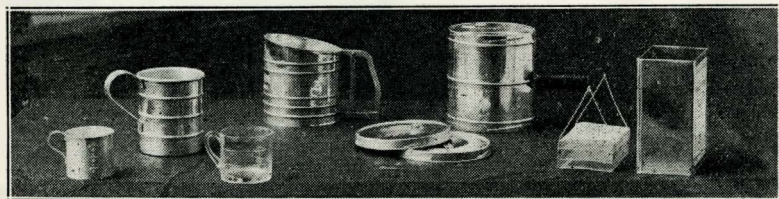


Fig. 3—Measuring cups and flour sieves that have given excellent service

Mixing Bowls and Spoons

Metal mixing bowls are the least satisfactory. Earthenware bowls are better. Enamelware is likely to chip off. Every housewife should have at least two good mixing bowls for ordinary use and a couple of larger ones when extra quantities must be mixed. A bowl that tapers and is not too large at the base is convenient because eggs can be beaten or butter and sugar creamed in the mixing bowl. A wooden spoon with the right length handle is very satisfactory.

Beaters

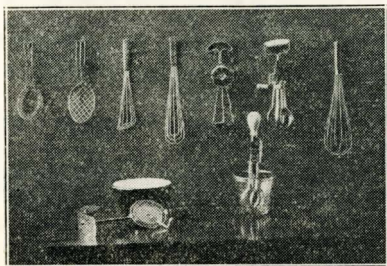


Fig. 4.—Different types of beaters that have proved their worth.

The illustration shows nine different beaters. The beater at the right is fine for mixing large quantities of batter. The work can be done quickly and thoroughly. The second is a Dover beater. It has comfortable handles both at the top and side. The cogs do not slip. It runs with an even smooth motion. Sugar and fat may be creamed for butter cakes with this beater. The mayonnaise mixer just below on table is of the same type and gives a fine texture which is very satisfactory. This beater comes with a graduated glass bowl and cover. The third beater is the turbine beater. It is fine for mixing small amounts of egg, cream or white sauce batter. It can be used in a small dish. The fourth and fifth beaters from the right are excellent for mixing batters. The last two beaters are wire whisks. They require more effort to get results than any of the others. It is a debatable question whether they give the best results with egg whites where larger volume is an important factor. In souffles, angel food cakes and omelets, the lightness of the finished product depends very largely upon the amount of air beaten in. The earthen bowl with beater is satisfactory for making mayonnaise.

Thermometers

There are a number of cooking operations that are made easier by the use of the thermometer because the guess work is done away with. Baking, frying in deep fat, candy making and jelly making are easier if the temperature is accurately controlled. Experimental work indicates that yeast bread bakes best at 350 to 400 degrees, quick breads 450 degrees, egg mixtures (angel food, souffles, custards) 250 to 350 degrees. Why should the housewife guess? The best ovens carry accurate thermometers. Separate oven thermometers can be purchased for \$1.50. If these must be used in ovens without glass doors, it will of course be nec-

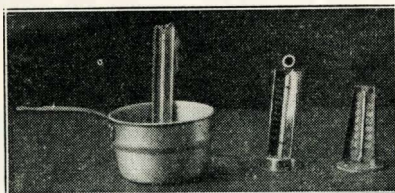


Fig. 5.—Thermometers

essary to open the oven, which will change the reading somewhat. However, it is possible to read the thermometer quickly. A variation of 15 to 20 degrees will make very little difference in the finished product. If an oven is well insulated, the temperature is fairly even throughout. A coal or wood stove must be kept well cleaned if it is to bake properly. A sheet of asbestos may be used on the top of a movable oven to help hold the heat.

A good oven thermometer has a circular metal disk with asbestos lining to protect the thermometer against direct heat through the metal. The scale is on an upright frame which fits easily into cleats on the circular piece. The scale has large letters and is easily read. The cost is about \$1.25. There is a small circular oven thermometer costing \$1.00 that is accurate and requires very little oven space. It can be used on shelves that are close together.

Perhaps candy is made on the hit and miss method more often than any other product. The thermometer removes all guess work. When the syrup indicates the desired temperature it is removed from the fire. There is no worry. The candy is finished. For boiled frosting, the temperature is 238 degrees.

The candy thermometer is used for deep fat frying. It will serve again in jelly-making time. Temperature 218 to 220 degrees.

A good candy thermometer has the tube of mercury fastened on a single metal frame with a protecting movable shield for the bulb. The double frames are hard to clean. There is a metal slide at the back of the thermometer which fastens over the edge of the kettle so as to hold the thermometer upright at the depth desired. A wooden handle on a short chain makes it easy to lift out the thermometer instantly. There is a hole in the handle by which to hang it. If the mercury separates, it is brought together again by a quick jerk. It is rather hard to read until one is used to it. The numbers are small. The cost is \$1.50 to \$2.00.

Pans

Baking pans should be well constructed. They are easier to clean if one piece with rounded corners. The square corner must invariably be dug out. Examine the pan for depth. A shallow bread, muffin, pie or cake pan is always a disappointment. The finished product will be better shaped if made in a deep pan.

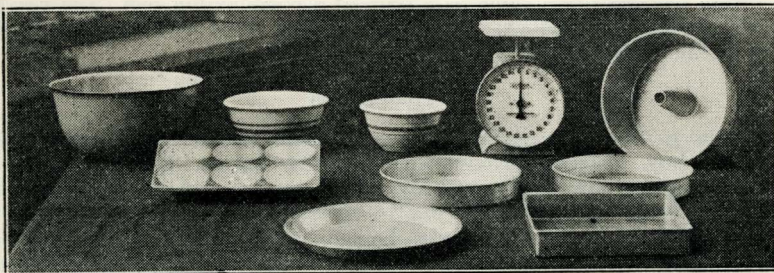


Fig. 6.—Baking pans that are easily cleaned.

Muffin pans should be flat on top and fit tightly into the frame work. Even then it is difficult to keep them clean around the joints. The best angel food cake pans are cast in one piece with a center funnel for more even distribution of the heat. This funnel is flat on the end and about an inch longer than the depth of the pan. The bottom of the pan is round. There are no corners. When removed from the oven, the pan is set on the funnel to cool. The cheaper pans have standards, generally three, on the rim. These pans are harder to keep clean. Aluminum pans are very



Fig. 7.—Glass baking dishes.

satisfactory for baking. New aluminum pans are better if they are scoured with steel wool before they are used. Aluminum pans are cast in one piece. Tin pans generally have joinings that are hard to clean. Baking sheets are fine for cookies if they have a handle to aid in removing them from the oven. Glass baking pans are very satisfactory. If handled carefully they will last indefinitely. They are fairly easy to clean.

Scales

Every kitchen should have scales so that the housewife can easily check the weight of her food purchases. A scale should weigh up to twenty-five pounds at least. The flat top scale is more convenient than the hanging scale.

Can Openers

Can openers often come as a part of a combination tool. The result is not always satisfactory. A good can opener must carry a sharp edge and do the work quickly and easily.

Meat Grinders

Meat grinders are one of the greatest labor saving devices the housewife can buy. Select a grinder with very few knives. The knife of medium cut is the one most commonly used. A grinder in which the barrel will open lengthwise so that it can be cleaned readily is to be preferred. The ends of the barrel should also be removable. A rim on the edge of the barrel that comes flush with the inside edge is a factor to consider as an aid to cleaning. Fasten the grinder in a convenient place so that it will be ready for use any time.

Knives

There is one piece of equipment that every homemaker owns—"a dull butcher knife", in spite of the fact that she always needs a sharp one. It will pay her to invest in a good knife sharpener even though she can sharpen a knife with a few draws across a stone jar or stove pipe. She may use a butcher's steel, but there are knife sharpeners that are easier to use. One consists of two sets of wheels held securely in a frame. The frame is screwed to the work table in a convenient place. A knife is

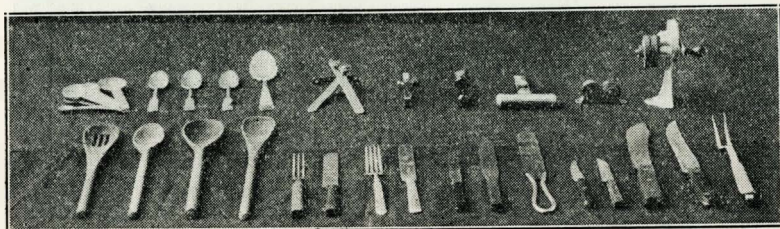


Fig. 8.—Small equipment that will give service

sharpened by drawing it with an even stroke between the wheels. A jerky uneven stroke will nick the knife. In the larger sharpener, the knife is held firmly between the wheels while the handle is turned.

Cut down on the number of knives but have the few that you do own useable. Perhaps an agreement can also be reached by which the house knives will not be used outside. A knife of good steel, stainless, well sharpened, and in its place is a time-saver to the busy housewife. A butcher knife, bread knife, two paring knives and spatula are almost a necessity in every household.

The best knives are of stainless steel. The steel extends through the center of the wooden handle and has from two to three rivets to hold it in place. With careful treatment, the knife will hold an edge. Dropping a knife, throwing it in a drawer with other knives, or leaving it on the stove where it will heat destroys the edge more than ordinary use. A knife may be hung in a wooden rack, steel spring rack, dropped into leather bands, or placed in a drawer with separate compartments lined with blotting paper.

A good butcher knife is six to eight inches in length—rather narrow blade. A chubby blade is not as satisfactory for every day use. It costs about \$1.00. A paring knife has a slender tapering blade—cost 20c. A bread knife is longer than the butcher knife—cost \$1.00. The spatula is made in different sizes. A good spatula must have a flexible blade—one that will bend almost at right angles and not break. One an inch, and a quarter wide by nine inches long is a good size to buy. The wider spatula is fine to use as a plate scraper or to turn pancakes. The housewife will find many uses for it as soon as she owns one.

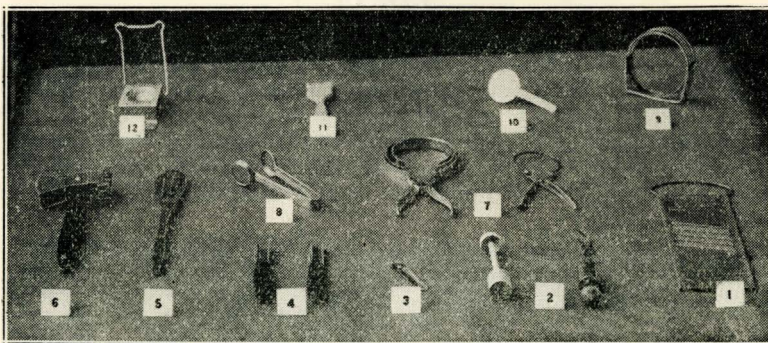


Fig. 9.—Accessory Kitchen Equipment

1. Slaw cutter.
2. Two types of cream separators for milk bottles.
3. Top remover for milk bottles.
4. Two types of corn cutters and scrapers for sweet corn.
5. Excellent type of wooden spoon for creaming butter and stirring batters.
6. Steak pounder.
7. Two types of jar sealers.
8. Lifter for small hot articles as eggs or potatoes.
9. Mixer for combining fat and flour.
10. Pie crust marker and sealer.
11. Pastry brush.
12. Slicer for preparation of garnishes.

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